STATEMENT

by

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Member of the Scientific Jury appointed by Order No. P-109-301/28.08.2026 of the Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, pursuant to a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Public Health,
Minutes No. 264/25.08.2026

Re: Procedure for the defence of the dissertation by
Dr. Galina Dimova Neykova-Sidorenko

"Psychophysiological Assessment of the Risk to Health and Work Ability in Small and Medium-sized Businesses"

Supervisors: Prof. Teodora Dimitrova, MD, PhD

Assoc. Prof. Tsvetelina Tarpomanova, MD, PhD

Submitted for public defence before a Scientific Jury for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education "7. Health and Sport", professional field "7.1. Medicine", under the doctoral programme "Hygiene (including occupational, community, school, radiation hygiene, etc.)".

Brief biographical information:

Dr. Galina Neykova-Sidorenko graduated in Medicine from Medical University – Varna in 1995. In 2024, she obtained a specialty in Occupational Medicine. Her professional career includes work as a physician in internal medicine and emergency medical care, as well as a general practitioner. She subsequently pursued her professional career in the pharmaceutical

sector. Her research interests focus on occupational stress, mental health in the workplace, work ability and the prevention of occupational burnout.

Relevance and significance of the topic:

The dissertation is devoted to the psychophysiological assessment of the health and work ability of workers in small and medium-sized enterprises. The increasing demands of the modern working environment bring to the fore the issues of occupational stress, the protection of mental health and the maintenance of work ability. The changes in the working environment associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, discussed in the dissertation, further underline the significance of these issues. The practical significance of the study lies in the potential for its findings to serve as a basis for proposing work–rest schedules and measures to prevent occupational stress, tailored to the nature of the work performed and the observed dynamics of work ability.

Structure and content:

The dissertation comprises 186 pages and is structured into six chapters covering a literature review; aim, tasks and methods; results; discussion and limitations; conclusions and recommendations; and contributions. The bibliography includes 134 references.

The literature review examines mental health and well-being in the workplace, the mechanisms of stress and approaches to its management. It presents the main theoretical models of occupational stress, the specific characteristics of small and medium-sized enterprises and the changes in the working environment associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The issues reviewed provide a rationale for the choice of topic and the research approach.

The aim is to provide a psychophysiological assessment of the health and work ability of workers in administrative and production units, on the basis of which work–rest schedules can be proposed. Five tasks have been set to achieve this aim, covering working conditions, lifestyle, health status, mental health and the dynamics of work ability.

The study includes a total of 314 individuals from administration, information technology, construction, garment manufacturing and agriculture. Questionnaire-based, clinical and laboratory methods, the Work Ability Index (WAI), a cancellation test, graphic tremometry,

the SAN test and standardised psychometric instruments were used. Functional measurements were conducted at the beginning, middle and end of the working day on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Individual indicators were analysed in different subsamples according to the valid data available. Descriptive, comparative, correlation and regression analyses were applied.

The results show predominantly good and very good overall work ability among the individuals assessed using the WAI. Monitoring with the cancellation test identifies the highest levels of accuracy and productivity in the middle of the working week and a decline at the end of the Friday working day. Data on perceived stress, depressive symptoms and the components of occupational burnout are presented, together with analyses of their relationships with functional status. The significance of the nature of work, organisational conditions, and behavioural and health characteristics for work ability is examined.

The discussion compares the findings with data from the literature and takes account of the limitations of the study. The conclusions summarise the associations identified and the differences between the groups studied. The recommendations are aimed at optimising work–rest schedules and task allocation, making ergonomic improvements and preventing occupational stress.

The contributions are classified as scientific and practical. Their key aspects include the combination of functional and psychometric methods, the monitoring of daily and weekly dynamics of work ability, and the proposed prevention guidelines for predominantly mental and predominantly physical work. Their practical value lies in their potential to support the organisation of the work process and the protection of the health of workers in small and medium-sized enterprises. ***The dissertation abstract*** comprises 54 pages and accurately reflects the structure and content of the dissertation in detail.

Conclusion:

The dissertation entitled "Psychophysiological Assessment of the Risk to Health and Work Ability in Small and Medium-sized Businesses" addresses a significant issue in occupational medicine and presents a comprehensive study with a practical focus. I give a positive assessment of the dissertation and recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury award Dr. Galina Dimova Neykova-Sidorenko the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field "7.1. Medicine", under the doctoral programme "Hygiene (including occupational, community, school, radiation hygiene, etc.)".

Заличено на основание чл. 5, §1, б. „В“ от Регламент (ЕС) 2016/679

Sofia

03.11.2026

Prepared by

Assoc. Prof. Vlayko Vodenicharov, MD, PhD